



# Senator Wayne Allard's Report from Washington

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## Allard Capital Conference

The third annual Allard Capital Conference, co-hosted by the University of Colorado was held from May 17 through May 20.

This year's conference was a great success. Nearly 100 Coloradans from all walks of life travelled to Washington D.C. to interact with public policy makers such as Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve; 1996 Republican Presidential candidate Bob Dole; George Tenet, Director of the CIA and General Richard Myers, Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Participants also interacted with members of the Senate and House of Representatives including Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO), Chairman of the Indian Affairs Committee; Senator Tom Daschle (D-SD), Senate Minority Leader; Senator Phil Gramm (R-TX), Chairman of the Banking Committee; Senator Trent Lott (R-MS), Senate Majority Leader and Congressman Dick Armey (R-TX), House Majority Leader; Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA) and Colorado U.S. Representatives Joel Hefley, Scott McInnis and Mark Udall.

I would like to extend an invitation to any Coloradan interested in meeting today's government leaders to apply for next year's conference. For an application, or more information, contact one of my offices or visit my website at <http://allard.senate.gov>

## Great Sand Dunes National Monument

On May 11, I introduced my bill (S. 2547) to designate the Great Sand Dunes National Monument, in the San Luis Valley, as a national park.

This legislation will allow for the establishment of a national park, preserve and wildlife refuge; the acquisition of the Luis Maria Baca Grant No. 4, protection of San Luis Valley's water resources, hunting in the new preserve, and a local advisory council.

Similar legislation has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Scott McInnis (R-CO) and is cosponsored in the Senate by Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell. A hearing on the legislation is expected in the Senate Energy Committee early this summer and I look forward to working with them to pass this legislation in the 106th Congress.

## FROM THE SENATOR

### Smith And Allard Offer Prescription Drug Plan for Seniors

It seems like everywhere you turn, there is an advertisement, proposal, or an article concerning a Medicare prescription drug coverage plan for seniors. As I visited every county in Colorado for my yearly town meeting tour, one resounding question would come up. "What is Congress doing about a Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Plan?"

Last year, as you may recall, the Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare took on the task of reforming Medicare. One of their priorities for reforming Medicare was the inclusion of prescription drugs in the Medicare program. Unfortunately the Commission was unable to make it's recommendation for Medicare reform and a Medicare prescription drug coverage plan to Congress.

Recently I joined Senator Bob Smith from New Hampshire in introducing a voluntary Medicare prescription drug coverage plan, S. 2319. Our legislation creates a voluntary Medicare prescription drug coverage plan, would not increase Medicare premiums or taxes, and commences next year. Not only is this plan accessible and affordable to all beneficiaries, it is designed to provide meaningful protection and bargaining power for seniors.

Our legislation would create a new Medicare option with a total deductible of \$675. This deductible would apply to all hospital costs, doctor visits, laboratory tests, and prescription drug costs. After this deductible is met, Medicare would pay 50% of the first \$5,000 of prescription drugs - causing no increase in the Medicare premium - and creating no cost to the Medicare Trust Fund.

The President's proposal for a Medicare prescription drug coverage plan was included in his Budget Proposal for FY 2001. Not only would the President's plan cost the Medicare

Trust fund \$203 billion, it only begins in 2003 and with a monthly payment. A Medicare prescription drug coverage plan for seniors is needed as we speak.

Zogby America recently conducted a poll for 975 senior citizens and Independent voters during the month of April. The results of this poll showed that the Smith-Allard prescription plan garners 40% more support from respondents than President Clinton's plan. 68.2% of those polled support our plan as opposed to the 27.6% who supported President Clinton's plan.

The Senate Leadership has committed their efforts in ensuring that a Medicare prescription drug coverage plan will be passed this session. Both sides of the aisle have made a concerted effort to provide a Medicare prescription drug coverage plan proposal.

The Smith-Allard bill accounts for the Democrats request for the specific principles a Medicare prescription drug coverage plan should meet, plus three more. These principles are: it is voluntary; it is accessible to all beneficiaries; it is designed to provide meaningful protection and bargaining power for seniors; it is affordable to all beneficiaries; it is administered using private sector entities and competitive purchasing techniques; it is consistent with broader Medicare reform; *it is revenue neutral to preserve and protect the financial integrity of the Medicare Trust Fund; it does not increase premiums on seniors; it provides full benefits in 2001.*

As various proposals concerning Medicare prescription drug coverage plans come forth and develop, they must be examined carefully. It is crucial to pass a Medicare prescription drug coverage plan that is beneficial to all and will preserve and protect the financial integrity of the Medicare Trust Fund. I am sure once you see this proposal you will agree it is a good option not only seniors but for the Medicare program as well.

*Wayne*

### Questions? Comments? Concerns?

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